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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Korea	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Transportation in Ch'ongjin, North Korea	DATE DISTR.	4 March 1955
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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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1. The main thoroughfares of Ch'ongjin are still in defective condition and no repair work has been undertaken in the past few months. Vehicles must continually zigzag to avoid the many holes and tires wear out very quickly. The tires of nearly all the vehicles are not good enough for the winter season, and recent snowstorms brought proof of this. Night traffic is limited to a few buses and two or three jeeps used by the Neutral Nations Inspection Team (NNIT) stationed here. The bridges over the drainage canal are in good condition and do not seem to have been damaged by the war. The Susong Bridge, however, was destroyed and has been replaced by a pontoon bridge which enables heavy trucks to cross. The railroad bridge over the Susong Ch'on has been restored, but trains cross it only at a very low speed.
2. About 30 trucks are in circulation, all of Soviet type; light, medium and heavy.¹ Half of them are extremely worn down and breakdowns are frequent. Buses bearing Skoda trademarks are used primarily to carry school children going to middle school in the Eastern Harbor region, and secondly to carry the civilian population. The civilians often have to wait long for service. About eight of the buses are meant to complement the transportation network; however, they are still unable to replace the scheduled railway passenger service because of the lack of equipment and the poor condition of the roads. There are about 23 jeeps in operation, all Soviet models. About five delivery trucks are in operation, all in very poor condition and at the disposal of the North Korean administration only. Four automobiles are in circulation in the city and apparently furnish taxi and ambulance service.² Through the collective transport organization in Ch'ongjin, rice, charcoal, lumber, timbers, planks, etc. are moved by a column of many two-wheeled carts equipped with pneumatic or iron tires. These vehicles are drawn by oxen, which are continuously used and render invaluable services.

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3. A new wooden station and depot building serves as the main railroad station in Ch'ongjin. Here workers sort various materials from a pile of scrap iron which consists of locomotives, twisted rails, cars and wheels, made useless by bombardment. A very large shed across from the main building is used as a repair shop and workers repair and overhaul locomotives and cars on a 24-hour basis. All personnel wear blue uniforms. The station and surrounding areas are constantly guarded by troops of the North Korean army. Soldiers on duty generally wear an arm band on their left arm and the guard is composed of several sentries at fixed stations. Two or three trains carry passengers, but the only ones observed were trains carrying coal, huge trunks and logs for firewood, lumber for houses, and ties for repair and strengthening of railroad lines or small bridges. Trains go very slowly, not exceeding 30 kilometers per hour. Because of the depleted condition of the area, China and the USSR furnish rails and steel (sic) or wood ties. North Korea must import huge quantities of coal in order to handle steam engine traffic and to avoid a transport crisis with its unforeseeable consequences for the country's economy. The repair of railroad lines has already been of considerable benefit to the country and the people.

Comments:

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1. In view of the fact that [redacted] four North Korean battalions in Ch'ongjin and because of the size of the city, it would seem that more trucks would be in operation.

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2. [redacted] there are no taxis in Ch'ongjin but bus service throughout the city is good.

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